

21 September 2020

## **PAIN IN THE AGED CARE SECTOR DETECTED WITH INNOVATIVE APP**

An innovative technology that uses facial recognition technology to assess and score pain levels in real time has been used to assess pain for aged care residents during the pandemic, leading the Federal Government to extend its funding period.

PainChek® is a clinically validated mobile app that uses artificial intelligence to assess micro-expressions in a person's face and identify the presence and severity of pain in minutes and from up to a three-meter distance.

The Federal Government-funded national trial of PainChek in Australian residential aged care commenced just as the pandemic took hold, helping aged care staff detect and manage pain in residents with conditions such as dementia, who find it difficult to communicate.

To date more than 180,000 PainChek assessments have been conducted on more than 16,000 residents living with dementia, who often cannot communicate their pain.

CEO of Painaustralia, Carol Bennett said pain was a common experience for many Australians – and can be even more prevalent among our older population.

“Pain among older people can go undetected, which leads to under-treatment or poor management,” Ms Bennett said.

“It is estimated that up to 80 per cent of aged care residents have chronic pain, while 53 per cent of people in residential aged care have a diagnosis of dementia. As a result, pain is often undetected or mistreated in many aged care residents.

“On World Alzheimer's Day it is important to note that pain is widespread in aged care settings and particularly among older people who suffer from dementia. However, technology is closing the gap on undetected pain with innovative apps such as PainChek.”

“The timely implementation of new technologies in aged care is an important step towards improving pain management and the quality of life for Australia's most vulnerable older people and their families.”

“The Royal Commission into Aged Care has highlighted the much-needed changes in the sector, and with the added threat of COVID-19, it is a critical time to implement improvements and real action.”

PainChek Ltd CEO Philip Daffas said detecting pain in people with dementia can be particularly difficult because they may not be able to verbalise their pain or they are labelled as difficult or aggressive before it is discovered that they are in some form of physical pain.



“PainChek has given voice to those people who cannot verbalise their pain and we commend Aged Care Minister Richard Colbeck for recognising the benefits of this technology and extending the 12-month national trial for a further six months until June 2021,” Daffas said.

“The PainChek technology allows providers to measure pain levels from a socially-safe distance. The information is assessed and recorded within the app, providing the carer with essential information to facilitate the pain management process.”

The creator of the Abbey Pain Scale, Dr. Jennifer Abbey AM, said the app would help change the lives of people suffering in silence.

“Repurposing from a paper-based assessment tool to an app format is a game changer for aged care services. It is a highly effective tool for assessing pain for people who aren’t able to articulate their needs.”

*Dr Jennifer Abbey AM, Carol Bennett and Philip Daffas will be [presenting on pain and COVID-19](#) on the opening day of the International Dementia Conference 2020 – Care in the Age of Outrage.*

***The Federal Government funded PainChek grant is available to all Australian Residential Aged Care Facilities for a limited time period. To apply for a 12 month fully funded PainChek license for residents living with dementia or cognitive impairment contact PainChek at [www.painchek.com](http://www.painchek.com) or call 1800 098 809***

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#### **About PainAustralia**

PainAustralia is Australia’s peak national pain advocacy body working to improve the quality of life of people living with pain, their families and carers, and to minimise the social and economic burden of pain on individuals and the community.

#### **About PainChek**

PainChek® is the world’s first pain assessment tool that has regulatory clearance in Australia and Europe, and is transforming pain management to help give a voice to those who cannot verbalise their pain.

PainChek® intelligently automates the pain assessment process using AI, facial recognition and smartphone technology at the point of care.

For more information, please visit <https://painchek.com/>

#### **Media enquiries**

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